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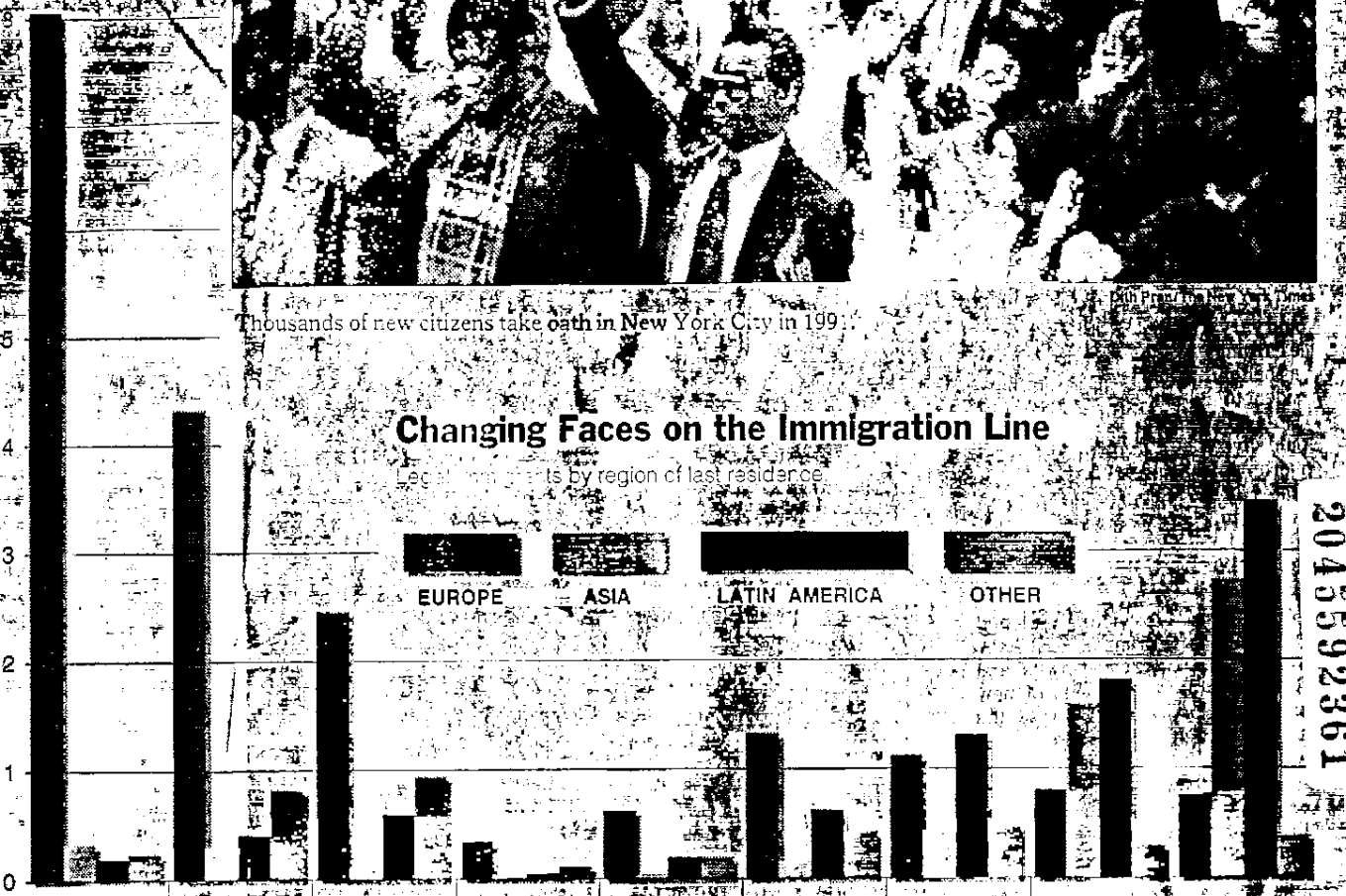
Thousands of new citizens take oath in New York City in 199[illegible]

[illegible] Press, New York Times

Changing Faces on the Immigration Line

[illegible]ts by region of last residence



Source: Immigration and Naturalization Service

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were comparable periods of angst before. We don't think we have any more wide open spaces to settle, however underpopulated we are compared to Asia. We have a powerful environmental movement now. If the Zero Population Growth movement is not as prominent as it was a decade or two ago, how many Americans think 250 million are too few, and that adding 10 million more a decade through immigration, as far as the eye can see, is a good idea?

Hue and Cry

Yet a fourth factor: There is our own home-grown racial problem, shamefully neglected in the ages of mass European immigration. It has been a priority of national policy now for 30 years, and we are far from overcoming it. Even if the economists can't agree that immigration hurts the job prospects of low-income blacks, common observation suggests strongly that it does. One thing that might be done immediately, however the affirmative action debate comes out, is to remove immigrants from affirmative action protection. They have, like all people in the United States, protection against discrimination through civil rights laws. Affirmative action was intended for our own native racial problem, not for immigrants, who now make up a large share of those entitled to its benefits.

Having said that, there are also aspects of current immigration that are beneficial in ways the older European immigration was not — in the large number of highly skilled doctors, engineers, computer specialists and others who find employment easily in the United States; in the availability of immigrant service workers, which permits highly educated women to work outside the home; in the rejuvenation of half-abandoned inner-city urban areas.

The balance sheet is difficult to draw up. Some restriction, particularly in the family reunification categories that now have preference, seems like a good idea. But a weighing of the costs and benefits does not come down sharply and self-evidently on one side or the other. And however it comes out, it will be driven by sentiments hardly affected by balance sheets. In the hysteria over anarchism and Bolshevism in the wake of World War I — there were mysterious bombings then, too — thousands of East European immigrants were summarily deported. In the current debate, we will all have to keep our heads and remember we all came from someplace else.

Source: https://www.industrydocuments.ucsf.edu/docs/prhj0004